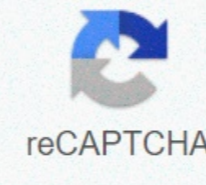




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## Short answer study questions things fall apart

Chapters 1-41. Why was Okonkwo famous? 2. Describe Unoka. 3. Why did umuofia's men convene a meeting? 4. Where does the story take place? 5. What influence did the oracle have on the decisions taken in Umuofia? 6. What was Okonkwo's greatest fear and passion? 7. What else upset Okonkwo about his son, Nwoye? 8. What did Okonkwo bring from his trip to Mbaino? 9. How did Okonkwo begin his prosperous career? 10. How did Ikemefuna react to living with Okonkwo's family? 11. What unprecedented thing did Okonkwo do during Peace Week? 12. How did people see yams? Chapters 5-71. Describe the Feast of the New Yam. 2. Who was Okonkwo's favorite son, and what did he always say about the child? 3. What unacceptable thing did Okonkwo do just before the New Yam Party? 4. Who was Chielo, and why was she important? 5. What sport did the locals enjoy watching during the party? 6. What influence did Ikemefuna have on Nwoye? 7. How did Okonkwo feel about Ikemefuna's influence on Nwoye? 8. How did the villagers feel about the coming of locusts, and what did they do about it? 9. What did the village decide to do with Ikemefuna? 10. Who gave the last blow to Ikemefuna, and why? Chapters 8-10 1. What did Okonkwo do whenever he thought about his father's weakness and failure? 2. What did Okonkwo tell himself about his participation in Ikemefuna's death? 3. What did Obierika tell Okonkwo about his participation in Ikemefuna's death? 4. Describe the meeting to determine the price of the bride of Obierika's daughter. 5. Men began to discuss rumors about white men. Who did men think white men were? 6. Describe the relationship between Ekwefi and Ezinma. 7. Describe Ekwefi's difficulties in becoming pregnant. 8. What did the healer say to Okonkwo after the death of Ekwefi's second son? 9. Describe the burial of Ekwefi's third son, and the reason for it. 10. Explain the meaning of Ezinma's iyi-uwa. 11. How did Okonkwo cure Ezinma's iba disease? 12. What was the purpose of the ceremony described in Chapter 10? Chapters 11-13 1. What did Chielo want with Ezinma? 2. What did Ekwefi do? 3. What did Okonkwo do when Chielo took Ezinma? 4. What was the purpose of the uri ceremony? 5. What was the meaning in the amount of wine the family brought? 6. What happened at the end of the ceremony? 7. Describe Ezeudu's funeral. 8. How did the author describe a man's life? 9. What happened during the frenzy? 10. What was the result of Okonkwo's action? What was the reason for the clan's actions against Okonkwo? 12. What did Obierika think after this calamity, and what was its conclusion? Chapters 14-19 1. Where did Okonkwo take his family to live? 2. How did Okonkwo feel about his circumstances? 3. Why did Uchendu speak to Okonkwo about the Supreme Mother? 4. Who came to visit Okonkwo during the second year exile, and why? 5. Briefly retells the story of Abame's destruction. 6. What was Obierika's reaction to the story? 7. What event did Obierika describe on his next visit two years later? 8. Who had Obierika found among the missionaries? 9. What was the iron horse? 10. Where did the missionaries in Mbanta build their church, why did they give them that particular piece of land, and what happened to them? 11. What was it about Nwoye's actions that upset Okonkwo so much? 12. Which group wanted to be admitted to the Christian church, and what happened? 13. Describe the incident with the holy python. 14. What did Okonkwo do before leaving Mbanta when his exile ended? 15. What was the elder's message to those at the party? Chapters 20-25 1. How did Okonkwo feel about his return to the clan? 2. What message did Okonkwo give to his sons and daughters after Nwoye left the family? 3. Describe the changes that have reached Umuofia in the seven years Okonkwo was in exile. 4. Okonkwo asked Obierika why the people had lost the power to fight. What was Obierika's response? 5. How did many other villagers feel about these changes? 6. What was Mr. Brown's conclusion about clan religion? How did he act to win converts? 7. What was Okonkwo grieving about? 8. Describe the conflict initiated by Enoch. 9. What was the result of the action taken by Ekwuqu? 10. How did Okonkwo feel when he returned from the white man's prison? 11. Why did men meet at the market? 12. What event happened on the market? 13. What happened to Okonkwo? 14. What did Obierika say to the Commissioner? 15. What was the Commissioner's reaction to the incident? Now that you've finished reading Things Fall Apart. How and why did things fall apart? Identify what you interpret as being a main theme and/or messages of things that come apart. Simon Gikandi suggests that the narrator's sympathy and Achebe... are not heroic (... Okonkwo), but the witness or storyteller (Obierika) who refuses to endorse Okonkwo's commitment to the central doctrines of his culture or the arrogant use of the power of the European colonizer (xiii). Do you agree? Why or not? Consider where and under what circumstances Achebe learned to write in the colonizer's language - English - and use Western literary genres such as realistic romance and tragedy. (See Chinua Achebe: A Biographical Note, Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Literature and Conclusions, pp. vii-xvii & xviii-xix, in our text.) Bruce King comments in Introduction to Nigerian Literature: Achebe was the first Nigerian writer to successfully transmute the conventions of romance, a European art form, into African literature. Achebe makes Western literary forms serve African values. For example, King observes, in a novel by Achebe European European it is subordinate dwelled to the picture of common life; The European economy is replaced by an aesthetic suited to the rhythms of traditional tribal life. Do you agree? Read below the quote from literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin and consider for what purpose Achebe appropriated\* the education, language and literary forms of the white man in order to make them his own. Language, for individual consciousness, is on the border between itself and the other. The word in language is half of someone else. It becomes proper only when the speaker populates him with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Before this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, a dictionary that the speaker receives his words!), but rather it exists in the mouth of other people, in the contexts of other people, serving the intentions of others: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it proper. --Mikhail Bakhtin, Discourse in The Novel in The Dialogical Imagination Also consider the account of the critic Susan Gallagher below in which Achebe discusses why he chose not to write or translate Things Fall Apart into Igbo Union. What does Achebe use the English language weapon to accomplish in Things Fall Apart? In response to the now infamous statement by Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o that African writers should write in African languages, Achebe commented [in a lecture at West Chester Univ.]: The British didn't push the language in my face while I was growing up. He chose to learn English and eventually write in English as a means of infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying it from within. ....It doesn't matter in what language you write, as long as what you write is good. achebe said... However, Achebe fully acknowledges that English is symbolically and politically linked to the spoils of traditional culture with intolerance and intolerance. Language is a weapon, and we use it, he argued. There is no point in fighting a language (qtd. in Gallagher). When someone asked if things had ever been translated into Igbo, Achebe's mother tongue, he shook his head and explained that Igbo exists in countless dialects, differing from village to village. Formal, standardized and written Igbo - like many other African languages - arose as a result of the desire of Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into indigenous languages. Unfortunately, when the Christian Missionary Society faced Igbo... they gathered six Igbo converts, each from a different location, each speaking a different dialect. The resulting Igbo Union had little relation to any of the six dialects - a strange hodge-podge without linguistics natural rhythm or oral authenticity -- yet the missionaries authorized it as the official written form of the Igbo languages. Achebe would not agree to have his novel translated into this Igbo Union linguistic farce. Consequently, one of the great novels in the world, which has been translated into more than 30 languages, is unable to appear in the language of the culture itself that celebrates and cries. This irony seems a suitable symbol for the complex forms as Western Christianity has blessed and spoiled the cultures of Africa (Gallagher). Ikemefuna becomes Okonkwo's adopted son through a dispute between the village of Umuofia and a nearby village, Mbaino. After a woman from Umuofia is murdered in the Mbaino market, Okonkwo travels to Mbaino and demands that the village rent a virgin and a young man in order to avoid war with Umuofia. Mbaino fulfills, and upon returning to Umuofia, Okonkwo turns the young man, Ikemefuna, to his first wife for safety. Why do things fall apart with the District Commissioner reflecting on the book he's writing about Africa? The end of the novel is Achebe's most potent satirical stab in the tradition of Western ethnography. At the end of Okonkwo's story, Achebe alludes to the lack of depth and sensitivity with which Europeans will inevitably treat Okonkwo's life. Achebe shows that a book such as The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of Lower Niger, which the commissioner plans to write, reveals much more about the writers - the colonialists - than about the subjects supposedly studied. The title of the book is also ironic, as it reflects the total lack of communication between Europeans and Africans. Although the Commissioner thinks that he has succeeded in the fication of these tribes, he has only contributed to his restlessness and growing lack of peace. In addition, the artifice of wrapping the narrative as fodder for an ethnographic study dates back to the end of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. As Marlow, the main storyteller in Heart of Darkness, concludes his tale of colonization in Africa, the early narrator, waiting with Marlow to sail to sea, returns and ponders the water, leaving the reader wondering what atrocities beyond those in Marlow's story the British Empire will commit. The conclusion of Things Fall Apart gives the impression of a similar structure within a story. When the report of how the settlers imposed themselves on Umuofia concludes, the Commissioner contemplates the bill, leaving little doubt that he will now impose European values on his version of the account. What is the nature of Okonkwo's relationship with Ezinma? Although Okonkwo is usually misogynist, his frequent observations that he wishes Ezinma to be his son because she has the right spirit suggest that he desires an affectionate attachment to his children, as long as it is not shown or openly recognized. He values Ezinma not because she exhibits desirable male traits, but because of her tacit bond of sympathy and understanding. What does the repetition of number seven suggest about the novel? In several places (Mr. Brown's conversations with Akunna, for example), the novel explicitly focuses on the theological and moral similarities between Christianity and the Igbo religion. The repetition of number seven — symbolically important to both religions — is another way to highlight the similarities between the two cultures. The text seems to draw a parallel between the apparent randomness of the symbolic number often chosen by Igbo and the determinism of Christianity's dependence on Christianity in number seven in the Bible and in the creation myth. In fact, the text explicitly refers to rest on the seventh day; this return to number seven marks a similarity between the belief systems of the two cultures. Systems.

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